

Spain and California Announce International Collaboration to Advance Stem Cell Research toward Cures

Posted: December 3, 2008

MADRID, Spain, December 3, 2008—The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), the state's stem cell agency, and the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (MICINN) announced today an international collaboration on stem cell research.

The agreement was signed here today by the Spanish Minister for Science and Innovation, Cristina Garmendia, and the President of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, Alan Trounson.

CIRM and the MICINN are laying the foundation for potential joint Spanish-Californian research initiatives to advance stem cell therapies for treatment of diseases with a high social and economic impact, such as metabolic, cardiovascular and neurodegenerative diseases. The agreement will make it easier for researchers in California and Spain to obtain joint funding and to interchange know-how in the area of regenerative medicine. It may also encourage collaboration by developing workshops, conferences, as well as training and exchange programs for researchers.

"CIRM and MICINN share the mission to accelerate the field of stem cell research as a whole through international collaborations that involve the best scientific endeavors, regardless of geography," said CIRM president Trounson.

Spanish Minister Garmendia, noted that "fostering research excellence in stem cell research at the international level is a major step forward in finding new medical therapies for a wide range of serious diseases and injuries for which, as yet, efficient and definitive treatments are not available. This agreement will widen the already robust pipeline for collaboration between scientists in California and Spain." She added, "these collaborations were greatly strengthened in 2005 when Prof. Izpisua Belmonte of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies agreed to direct the Center for Regenerative Medicine in Barcelona."

Garmendia and Trounson expressed their gratitude to Prof. Izpisua Belmonte for having spearheaded this agreement.

The Spanish-Californian collaboration initiated today will build on the extensive infrastructure for stem cell research and regenerative medicine that has been created in California and Spain during the past few years. Joint projects could include:

- Development of stem cell-based interventions for chronic cardiac ischemia;
- Development of cellular therapies for diabetes;
- Development of treatments for neurodegenerative diseases;
- Basic research into stem cell creation and differentiation.

About CIRM: The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) was established in 2005 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities. To date, the CIRM governing board has approved 229 research and facility grants totaling more than \$614 million, making CIRM the largest source of funding for human stem cell research in the world. For more information, please visit www.cirm.ca.gov.

About MICINN: The Ministry of Science and Innovation (MICINN) is the highest organ of governance for higher education, scientific research and technological innovation in Spain. MICINN, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Consumer Affairs, and the governments of the Autonomous Communities, has prioritized stem cell research by means of an increase of the budgets dedicated to research in this field, the elaboration of an adequate legal and ethical framework for stem cell research, the establishment of stem cell banks for research purposes, the creation of dedicated cooperative research networks and centers in the areas of cell therapy and regenerative medicine, as well as, through agreements with international institutions to grant joint research projects and the interchange of scientists. For more information, please visit www.micinn.es.

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